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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Wayside Gatherings.

Who is My Neighbour ?

Dealing with this question in a recent address, Dr. L. P. Jacks, observed that it is necessary to broaden and deepen our idea of who and what our neighbour really is. "This modern humanitarianism which accounts every human being as a neighbour is a great doctrine, and it is a great improvement on doctrines that went before it. But I cannot help thinking that what Nurse Cavell said about patriotism needs to be said about humanitarianism. Humanitarianism, broad as it is, is not enough. The human beings among whom we live are not the only neighbours we have. We have others—some below us, some around us, some above us—and we ought to reverence all of them. That was the great formula of Goethe—The threefold reverence, which is the complete outfit of the religious man."

* *

I Wonder ?

A lady once asked Carlyle if he did not really think that the Londoners would treat Jesus very differently from the way in which the people of Jerusalem treated him ? "If he came," Carlyle retorted, "preaching to the fashionable world a message which pleased them, you, madam, would send me a card inviting me to a reception at your home in His honour. If he came consorting with publicans and sinners and preaching revolutionary ideas (as he did) you would send Him to Tyburn."

The Final Test of our Services.

Writing in "The Methodist Recorder" a few weeks ago on "The Anglo-Catholic," Dr. Russell Maltby remarks that the final test of all our services is : "Do they conduct us to the threshold of God and open the door? Do they bring us into the world where Christ is, where we taste the powers of the world to come ? . . . . . Men faint when they can only see the things that are temporal, and a church see the thing that are temporal, and a church exists to make real the things that are unseen and eternal. The preacher must toil with words, but his words only discharge their office when they have become a stairway to the tower that opens to the sky, where, leaning on the support of the uttered word the soul stands agaze on the glory of God which is unspeakable. Music can help, but its best help is when it has passed us on beyond its own reach, and we know ourselves to be children of the infinite with eternity hidden in our hearts, and God holding our human frality by the hand."

John Bunyan.

In an interesting article on John Bunyan, reprinted in "The Outline," Mr. Augustine Birrell remarks :—"The history of literature is full of surprises, but none of them is more surprising than this pre-eminence of Bunyan after three hundred years. Of all our great authors Bunyan is the most autochthonous. He rose straight up from the depths of our English soil. Nobody but a social science prig would describe him as a "self-educated" author. Dr. Parr would not allow that he was educated at all, yet he managed somehow at a village school to learn to write legibly, to read intelligently, and to speak plainly, three things which Parr never succeeded in accomplishing. Yet no one of these things, however hard to acquire at public schools and universities, will account for "The Pilgrims' Progress" though they may explain many other of Bunyan's books, for it should never be forgotten that Bunyan was one of our most voluminous authors, and managed to fill two stout folios with his publications which are more numerous than the days of the year. He out-baxters Baxter." A. W.

Notes of the Month

A Non-Subscribing Church.

It would yet appear that there is a want of appreciation of the functions of a Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. As a result confusion of thought is likely to follow. The very idea of subscription or of "non-subscribing" conjures up in a vague kind of way an idea that it has something to do with finance or an indisposition to contribute adequately to the Church as an institution. The idea of Subscription, as all our people should be well aware, is not confined by any means to gifts in kind or in money, but is rather a religious attitude, a distinctive term and an emphatic assertion of a modern ideal, which is steadily gaining ground in the Christian Church, that affixing signatures to dogmatic theological tests is incompatible with progressive revelation of religious truth.

Non-Subscription is no mere negative term, but one that gradually dawned on our fathers in the faith and has been handed down to us as a priceless heritage that dogmatic assertions universally believed in the middle ages are no longer adequate expressions of God's ways and dealings with men, that they contradict sacred personal convictions, place obstacles in the path of growing knowledge and, above all, have for too long a period proved a formidable barrier to individual religious faith.

The principle of non-subscription to dogmatic tests has raised aloft a banner that in our day serves to shelter under an ideal of life all who think and feel nobly. It vehemently asserts that religion is eternal, that no static opinions however conscientiously held can either confine or permanently harm it. Religion responds as well to the primary needs of the primitive man as to that of civilised man. No dogma, no worship, no formula can, in our day, adequately express the religious sentiment. In the words of Ernest Renan "Woe to him who asserts that the era of religions is past! Woe to him who deems it possible to give back to the old systems the force they possessed when they leaned upon the imperturbable dogmatism of other days! With this dogmatism we must needs dispense; we must dispense with the fixed beliefs which have been the source of so much strife and division, and also of so much fervent conviction. We must cease to believe that it is our duty to keep others in beliefs which we no longer share. Spinoza was right in his horror of hypocrisy: hypocrisy is cowardly and dishonest, but above all it is useless." The formulæ of revelation change from time to time; what is essential continues to exist under other terms. Let liberty then be the last word of our religious attitude. It is the most efficacious and certain as regards the progress of civilization. "Humanity has always advanced along the path of progress with prodigously unequal steps. The liberty of some to be absurd is the condition of others to be reasonable. Let no one in our fellowship ask the inane question, what does the principle of non-subscription stand for? It stands for an ideal of truth whithersoever it may lead. If may be as yet but insufficiently grasped. It does not count itself to have apprehended, but this one thing it does, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth into those things which are before. And is not this in the last resort the attitude of believers in Unitarian affirmations. It is an attitude which asserts full liberty to inculcate personal religious convictions. It is quite true, as Renan once said, "that liberal religion has no finality; but it is precisely in that respect that it is right, or at least it is in that respect that it is the only practical expedient, in presence of the individualism in belief which has become the law of our time."

Correspondence.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents.

All communications to the Editor should be sent not later than the 16th of each month, to Rev. D. J. Williams, The Manse, Killinchy, Co. Down.

To the Editor of Non-Subscribing Magazine.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

In the December Number of the Non-Subscribing Magazine you print a very long article from another correspondent in which he repudiates a "soft impeachment" made by me as to autobiography, and immediately gives a very interesting bit of autobiography which I could parallel. He also gives us instructive information about distillation, etc., as practised in ancient as in modern times in lands stretching from "China to Peru" almost all of which was truth unnecessary. Ill-health prevents me from following him further. I content myself with acknowledging that our friend's knowledge is of an encyclopaedic character, and

by quoting from an article in "The Belfast News-Letter," of Saturday, 10th inst. :—

"At a meeting of the members of the Royal Albert Institute, it was decided, after considerable discussion, to instal a refreshment room as an additional attraction.

The meeting was presided over by the Dean of Windsor (Dr. Albert Baillie), who gave his whole-hearted support to the proposal :—

"If you have a refreshment room" said the Dean you don't go on drinking in the same way as in a public house ; indeed, you very often prefer to have coffee or tea. It is not a question of having a *bar* in which the obvious purpose is drinking, but a question of whether in an refreshment room, people should be free to have any kind of refreshment in moderation which they are accusttomed to have and like. There are many people who do not drink, but resent very much prohibition of any sort. "You know the effect prohibition has had on a very large part of the population of America. What it has done in a certain class of society in America is terrible. It was the most sober class before, and now it is a very drunken class."

Faithfully yours,

JAMES KENNEDY.

Art and Religion.

Text : I Kings, 6 : 29.—*And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.*

The greatest work of art recorded in the Bible is Solomon's Temple. From the point of view of art it is unique in Hebrew history. When we read the artistic details of the buildings, the palm trees and flowers carved on the cedar panelling that lined the inner walls, the figures carved on the doors of olive and cypress wood and so on, we cease to wonder why this relatively small structure took seven years to build.

Solomon was raising a building to the glory of God, not any kind of building but a beautiful building, not only a building in which to worship but a building that would inspire worship. Further, Solomon was not very much concerned over the origin of his decorations ; it was sufficient for him that they were artistically beautiful.

He did not refuse to use cherubims because they originated in another religion, he did not leave his walls plain and bare because the idea of carving palm trees and flowers came from the temples of other religions. He did not consider the architectural features of the building unsuitable for the Hebrew religion because the temple was very little more than a copy of Syrian and Phœnecian temples of that period.

In this first great monument of Hebrew Religion there was practically nothing distinctively Hebrew, either in the architectural features or in the carvings. Even the altar was of bronze after the Phœnecian pattern and not of stones after the traditional Hebrew pattern.

Consequently Solomon's Temple depicts the triump of Art over national prejudice and religious sectarianism.

When we come to define Art, this something which knows no boundaries of sect and creed and which speaks a language all can understand, we find ourselves in difficulties.

Art is something we feel, something we apprehend intuitively and not something hat can be defined in words. This is characteristic of everything that is highest and best in human life. All those things that make the difference between mere existence and life at its best, defy logical definition. How can one logically define friendship or love and yet how real these things are ? So with Art, it defies definition.

It is true that art speaks a language that all can understand but it is not a language of words that can be translated into any human language. Beauty of form, colour, and sound, expressed in the Fine Arts of Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music and Poetry (and for that matter expressed in any other way because art is not exhausted in the so-called Fine Arts), has a significance which can never be expressed in words.

To fully appreciate that significance one must have a new standard of values, a standard in which profit and loss, utility and other worldly conceptions have no part. As soon as art concerns itself with materialistic standards it ceases to be art.

In this respect it is very much like religion. What would we think of a man who was religious because he found it useful to be so ?

The similarities between art and religion are so great that it is sometines difficult to distinguish one from the other. The boundary lines are usually quite arbitrary, useluf for classification only.

If religion be regarded as a way of life as distinct from belief in a theological system,

as the obeying of all the highest and best impulses of human nature, then art and religion cannot be separated even in theory, to say nothing of practice.

A really great work of art is a prayer, it represents the outpouring of the human soul, the sacrifice of body, soul and mind on the altar of beauty. Any building, statue, picture, symphony or poem that does not evoke a feeling of reverence and awe is not a great work of art.

Perhaps the most striking resemblance between art and religion is that neither can be taught by rules and regulations. Religion at its best can never be taught, neither can art at its highest.

The Architect, Sculptor, the Painter, the Musician and the Poet must, of course, master the necessary facts, rules and conditions corresponding to the nature of his task.

One must be well acquainted with the laws of weight, thrust, support, resistance and other properties of solid matter, another must know the qualities of marble and be intimately versed in the various aspects of the human body in rest and in motion, another must have an extensive knowledge of nature's varying aspects and know the rules and conditions for representing them in colours on a plane surface, another must master the complicated and laborious rules of musical form and combinations of sound, another must acquire a wide vocabulary and carefully study euphony, rhyme and metre. However, a complete mastery of these things no more makes a man an artist, than a complete mastery of the Bible or the Westminster Confession makes a man religious.

Art, like religion, lies outside the scope of rules and regulations, and therefore cannot be taught.

What man could write down, in a way that others could understand and act upon, how Wren produced the dome of St. Paul's, that masterpiece of graceful line and harmonious proportion; how Michael Angelo made the still marble breathe and speak; how Turner captured the sunset and transferred it to canvas; how Beethoven conquered unknown kingdoms in the realm of harmony; how Shelley expressed in ordinary words the exquisite fineness and sensitiveness of the human soul?

Similarly, what man could write down, in a way that others could understand and act upon, the rules and regulations to be kept by a man who would be religious in the best sense of the term?

Life is an art, and a good life is the highest art, though theology has, for the most part, taught that a good life is a science with rules and regulations.

The art of a good life cannot be taught by means of creeds, dogmas and infallible books.

There is nothing modern in all this. It is at least as old as Jesus. What regulations could govern the conduct of those who are to be perfect as their Father which is in Heaven is Perfect?

What set of rules could possibly teach a man to be perfect? The answer is none, for the simple reason that a good and noble life, the kind of life to which Jesus called men and women, is the highest of all arts, and art that cannot be taught by man but one that can be comprehended by listening to the promptings of the still small voice within.

Summary of sermon preached in All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, at Sunday Evening Service, 11th December, 1927, by Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.

Gospel Preaching.

A Sunday School Superintendent, whose only claim to the office was that his father was the donor of the hall, in which the school met, and during his life-time was a benefactor of the church, was giving an address one Sunday afternoon to the School. The galling thing, about it, to the minister was, that this Superintendent belonged to another denomination, and had "dug himself in," too thoroughly to be got out very easily. He believed in "gospel preaching," and in his address to the children, he informed them "And there will be no water there!" An old woman sitting in a corner, looked at the minister, "with the tail of her eye," to see the impression this remark made on him, as much as to say, "That's the real sound doctrine for you."

It might surprise a few, who have come in, in recent years, as ministers and members, that not so many years ago, in our group of congregations in Ireland, such teaching, by some here and there, would have been taken very seriously. In one of our congregations, it was remarked of a past minister, that he didn't preach the Gospel, saying "There was nae hell, and such like." His critics were of the class to which the

Scotch beadle belonged, who expressed as his opinion that "a kirk without a hell, is no' worth a damn." Perhaps it was the same man, who said, "I ha'e my opinions, an' you ha'e your prejudices."

There is great fear of Popery in these days. A clergy-man in England, for some weeks past, has had to be guarded by the police, on his way to and from his church, to protect him from the assaults of the mob. No doubt, in the North of Ireland, many would say, "Serve him right, even if the crowd got at him."

In a Presbyterian Church, the minister may stand at the Communion table in Geneva gown, bands and hood. That would be perfectly correct. But, if in front of him, there was placed, with the communion-plate, a crucifix between two candles wouldn't there be an outcry? It would be considered extreme Popery; yet it would only be the most Protestant of Protestantism, for that is the custom of the Lutheran Church; the first to bear the name of Protestant, for the other churches which broke away from Rome, in old writings are more frequently referred to as "the Reformed Churches." The term "Protestant" does not seem to be frequently used, until a later date. But, if a rousing evangelist, a "son of thunder," mounted the pulpit, and described "the vast fires of Hell and the souls enclosed in certain fiery bodies, as it were in dungeons," that at once by crowds would be acclaimed "gospel preaching," the real sound doctrine. Yet, it would be more extreme Poperty, than candles or cross; because it is the first of the "Spiritual Exercises," so we are informed by one, who was a Jesuit for twenty years, which form the psychological training of the Society of Jesus.

It was the purpose of their founder, Ignatius Loyola "to compel the malleable nature of men admitted to his Order to conform to an artificial, standardised perfection." (He wasn't the only one to attempt that, witness the creeds and dogma of the Church). The first point is to train the imagination, and that is turned on to Hell to begin with,and the mental picture described, is the first lesson. "One meditating on the Passion is told to ask for grief, mourning, anxiety, and the other inward pains of the kind, that he may suffer together with Christ's suffering." Loyola wrote "He who gives the Exercices, if he perceives that the one who receives them undergoes no spiritual commotions of the mind, such as consolations or sadnesses; nor any agitations of different spirits; ought carefully to enquire if he performs the Exercices themselves at the prescribed times, and in what way."

Let a Protestant evangelical preacher stimulate the imaginations of his audience in this way, and night after night churches and halls will be crowded out, to hear him; but his preaching is far more dangerously in the direction of Popery, than that of a ceremonialist, who may combine with his ritual a liberal interpretation.

To show how little either black or white surplices have to do with the matter, it is generally admitted that in Scotland, even among Presbyterians, sacramental doctrine is High, much more so than in England.

Hell, yet remains, it is to be feared the foundation of what to multitudes is "gospel preaching," but, how different from the "glad tidings," which if only understood and widely accepted, would bring in "the Kingdom of Happiness."

ULLIN.

Temperance Notes.

Ireland, once the home of sorrow and troubles, is being claimed as one of the trophies of Peace, and already new ideas are passing into the main currents of common thought. It may be we are too near events to see the importance of this development, but it is real and there are signs of the people coming into contact with schemes of statesmanship and into an appreciation of the value of institutional life. It is desirable that the citizens of the Six Counties should keep pace with the citizens of Britain, and if possible give a lead, touching things which affect corporate welfare and to this end, one must be prepared for changes in corporate life, indeed, they are on the way, and no one can tell where they will finally lead. Growth of interest and power on the part of individuals and institutions will, it is hoped stimulate larger desires, which in turn will demand larger liberties and newer powers. At least such results are the historic experiences of self-government throughout the Empire.

Self-Government is a great thing, and if Peace can enable citizens to do for themselves all that government once did for them, it will be a fine accompaniment to her presence. But self government is intended to secure good government, and to this end it is desirable that citizens should have clear minds

and spirits which are responsible to the best things mankind is capable of. It is unthinkable that an ignorant, drunken, sensuous, immoral or careless people could either secure great results for themselves or develop free institutions. The reins of government would not be safe in their hands, and they have no worthy contribution to make. It is remarkable, but already the Northern Government has begun to deal with such problems as Education, Poor Law, Unemployment and Fisheries, Finance, Public Health, Temperance, Trade Unions and Agriculture, etc. These are important matters, and greater attention must yet be given to them. They have become part of the new life of the people, and in years to come, provision will have to be made for new experiments and extensions of older ones. How will the people do their part amid these changes? They will meet situations as they arise through their institutions.

But it may be asked, what institutions? and the answer is simply, the Churches, the Orange Lodges, Medical Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Co-operative Societies, Women's Guilds, Literary, Debating and Dramatic Societies, Touring Associations, Clubs, Agricultural Societies, etc. In common law these institutions are free to manage their own affairs, and promote whatever cause they have at heart. Their ultimate object is to make a contribution to the common stock of agreed thought in a constitutional manner.

So far as votes can affect changes in public life any improvement in corporate life which may arise will he due to the impact of institutions upon public life and of individuals using their votes to secure some definite demands.

If amid change, and possible good things which could enrich the life and liberties of Ulster, citizens believed in voting for liquor, if they believed that the equipment and maintenance of a drinking club was their ideal; if they only desired a cheap and plentiful supply of liquor, there would be slender hopes of developing either good government or self-government. On the contrary, progress can only be made, when citizens are capable of promoting, enjoying, and maintaining progressive life.

The liquor business has no desire to share in civil life or promote civic virtues. It has no constructive thought to offer, and no government ever was indebted to it for a specific contribution to well ordered local or natural life. The Trade is organised around the doctrine "Our Trade Our Politics"—A miserable creed, rooted in selfishness, and it is intimately associated with a subtle form of exploitation which results in debased humanity. It is agreed that citizens should understand and share in public life. They should be able to express an intelligent view on current questions, and share in efforts to provide wise counsels, sound judgments and sane leadership. Efficient citizenship is built on those qualities, and it needs a large and growing body of men and women whose minds are clear, and whose eyes do not see life through the colours of the wine glass, or the steamy windows of the tavern, to do the needful. From a civic point of view Ulster cannot afford the burden of a liquor business. At best it is an expensive luxury, and citizens have sufficient burdens to bear without shouldering responsibility for this unnecessary one, but in the greater sphere of conscious citizenship, the liquor business should be regarded as a positive nuisance and danger. There is a choice before every God-fearing citizen which, when made, may determine the weal or woe of Northern Ireland, and also, whether a good job will be made of government in the Six Counties.

It is a great thing to be on the side which responds to the opportunities of the hour, and of making the dawn of Peace a really fruitful time. No one can have reason to regret their efforts to build up a sober country and make possible the creation and preservation of a free, happy, self-governing and sober country. A.C.S.

Mountpottinger Unitarian Church.

Dedication of Memorial Font.

On Sunday afternoon, March 18th, there was dedicated the Memorial Font presented to the Church by members of the Davidson family to perpetuate the memory of the Misses J. & M. Davidson and their connection with the Congregation extending as it did for a period of over 50 years.

It was fitting that the Dedication Service should be conducted by Rev. M. Watkins, who until the end of July last was Minister of the Congregation and it was fortunate that the Committee of the Domestic Mission had invited him to preach the Annual Sermons. In the course of his address, Mr. Watkins remarked that the assembled congregation did reverence to the memory of

two sisters who devoted with unwearying faithfulness their lives to the cause and religious welfare of little children. He described it as fitting that the testimony placed to their memories should take the character it did as the life work so unselfishingly rendered had been on behalf of the children of the Sunday School.

The Preacher expressed his regret that he had not a fuller knowledge of Miss J. Davidson who unfortunately passed away very shortly after he came to Ulster but he had many recollections of Miss Maria Davidson and they all showed that she watched over the welfare of the congregational life with wisdom and tender solicitude. At the same time she had the power of effacing herself when occasion required so that she rarely, if ever, stood actually in opposition to any measure calculated by the congregation in meeting assembled to be advanttageous to the life of the Church or Sunday School. In conclusion he expressed the hope that the Font might prove a gift divinely blessed to all and that it might prove a source of abiding inspiration to those coming after us.

The Font is of wood, beautifully carved, and suitably inscribed by means of a brass plate, the whole reflecting much credit to Messrs. Purdy & Millard, Belfast, who had charge of the work and who also supplied the Hymn-board presented by the Women's League which was used for the first time on this particular Sunday.

The whole Service was very suitable to the occasion and Miss A. Beattie contributed as a solo " O for the Wings of a Dove," whilst the choir rendered the Anthem " The Rock that is higher than I."

Joy in Life.

" It is superstition that sets up sorrow as good, and all that tends to gladness as evil. God would show Himself envious were He to take pleasure in my impotence and in the ills I suffer. Rather in proportion to the greatness of our joy do we reach a higher perfection and participate more fully in the divine nature. Joy, therefore, can never be evil as long as it be regulated by the law of our true utility. A virtuous life is not a sad and gloomy one, a life of privation and austerity. How should the Divine Being take delight in the spectacle of my weakness, or impute to me, as meritorious, tears, sobs, terrors—all signs of an impotent soul ? Yes, it is the part of a wise man to use the things of this life and enjoy them as much as possible ; to recruit himself by a temperate and appetising diet ; to charm the senses with the perfume and the brilliant verdure of plants ; even to adorn his attire, to enjoy music, games, spectacles, and all the amusements that a man can bestow on himself without detriment to himself. The one thing of all others about which a free man thinks least is death. Wisdom lies in the contemplation not of death but of life." *From the Theologio-Political Treatise—Spinoza.*

Reports.

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The Annual Sermons on behalf of the Belfast Domestic Mission were preached on Sunday, March 18th, in the morning at All Soul's Church, Elmwood Avenue, and in the evening at First Church, Rosemary Street, by the Rev. Watkins, of Park Lane Chapel, Wigan. Taking the words of St. Paul in the 21st chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, " I am a citizen of no mean city," as his text in the morning, Mr. Watkins endeavoured to impress upon his hearers the noble heritage that was theirs in the Spiritual City of which all earnest minded people were citizens He was afraid that the modern tendency to avoid attendance at Sunday worship, and lack of support of church institutions was indicative of the fact that work in the Spiritual City was regarded as secondary by the majority of professed church members. In the evening he again sought inspiration from the words of St. Paul, from the II Corinthians, 6th chapter, he took the text, " As having nothing and yet possessing all things" Here again he stressed the fact that by his deeds is the true christian recognised. " Jesus was no King playing at being a Carpenter," said Mr. Watkins, " but an earnest worker with the heart of a King." People have limited His appeal by removing Him from this humble and human position. The quality of our work is the important factor. Mr. Watkins suggested that interest in the mission might go further than merely paying an annual subscription if and when asked to do so. This is not the highest work and though many cannot give personal service there must be many young people in our congregations who could identify themselves with the good work and help to fill up the thinning ranks of that army of faithful

workers at the mission that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church has provided in the past. The Annual Meeting was held on Monday night, in the Central Hall, the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, taking the Chair at 8 p.m. The usual reports and balance sheets were presented by the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. E. R. Jackson, the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. Mackenzie, and the Missioner, Mr. Norman Kirkham. The rest of the business was carried through expeditiously, Miss Hutton, proposing, in an able manner, that the best thanks of the meeting be accorded to the Rev. Matthew Watkins, for preaching the Annual Sermons. Although unable to be present at the morning service, Miss Hutton unconsciously enphasised the theme of Mr. Watkins' address, when she affirmed that an important part of the work of the mission was to arouse a sense of true citizenship in its members. Mr. E. R. Jackson, in seconding, expressed his personal satisfaction in once again hearing his old and valued friend preach, as well as the gratitude of the members assembled. Mr. Watkins in responding voiced his disappointment in the sparse attenance and regretfully wondered if his message had in any way touched the hearts of the people who had listened to his sermons. But he speedily returned to the optimistic note which characterises most of his statements. Public recognition, he said, was not absolutely necessary to useful work, the best work was often accomplished unnoticed. He recalled many faithful workers of other days and finished with a cheery message of hope and encouragement. The Chairman, Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, in moving the adoption of the Reports and Balance Sheets said it was a disgrace that at their annual meeting there should be only between 20 and 30 people present. There were in Belfast four Unitarian churches, and the latest available statistics showed there were roughly 800 stipend payers. Yet the amount contributed to the mission was only £63, or 1/7 per head per annum. That was what the average member of the Church in Belfast thought of the Domestic Mission. The truth was that there were only 170 actual subscribers, giving an average of 8/9 per head. Mr. Whitehouse felt that what was needed was that the work of the Mission should be brought more to the notice of all the stipend payers. The work of the mission is being most ably carried on by Mr. Norman Kirkham, who was cordially thanked for his services, but the work he is doing is sadly hampered by lack of interest and sympathy and particularly lack of money.

All Souls'.—The first serious attempt by All Souls' Dramatic Society to produce a full-length play has been an unqualified success. Last night this organisation, which was formed a little over a year ago as an addition to the various social activities of the congregation of All Souls' Unitarian Church, Elmwood Avenue, did J. Sackville Martin's three-act comedy "Cupid and the Styx," and the audience enjoyed every moment of it. "Cupid and the Styx" is an amusing story of the lighter side of hospital life and concerns two young house surgeons who both become engaged to the one girl, a pretty, but designing nurse. She plays the one off against the other with brazen effrontery and, whilst the young men are quarrelling about her, calmly accepts an offer of marriage from the senior surgeon—an elderly gentlet man who acted on the impulse of the momen- and is afterwards not quite sure that he has been wise in proposing to this attractive, self-assured and ambitious lady. There is a subsidiary theme in which the central figure is a young bank clerk, a friend of the doctor, who is dissatisfied with his position in life and longs to be an author. He indulges in mock heroics, and because editors and theatre managers refuse his works threatens to commit suicide. His wife laughs at him, and he reproaches her for lack of understanding and sympathy. How he is cured of his nonsense by the doctors, after he had taken a small dose of laudanum, would take too long in the telling, but the development is deliciously entertaining. The acting, as we have said, was splendid, and where all were so good it would be invidious to single out any particular members of the cast for special praise. Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, the minister of All Souls' Church produced the play, and also filled one of the principal roles with marked distinction. Mr. Donald Lockhart was the junior house surgeon, and the girl in the case was Miss Eileen Miller. Mr. Eric A. Naden was very amusing as the bank clerk with literary aspirations, and Miss Gladys Lewis acted with sincerity and charm in the role of his wife. Mr. James Henderson looked the part of the senior surgeon with an eye for a pretty girl, and Mr. Robert Frater made the most of his limited opportunities as the hospital porter, whose great ambition was to secure the job of public hangman.

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Banbridge.—There was a very interesting gathering in The Manse, on the afternoon of 14th March, 1928. It was a meeting of the

Ladies of the Congregation to hear from Mrs. Jackson, the aims and objects of the Women's League. Mrs. Jackson attended, and was accorded a real welcome. So well, and with such good effect did she expound these objects that before she left, a resolution was passed to the effect that Banbridge would form a Branch of the Ulster Women's League of Unitarians and other Liberal Christians and affiliate with Headquarters. Mrs. Jackson was thanked for the trouble she had taken and for her clear explication, and it is hoped that much good will result to the cause in general, and the Banbridge Congregation in particular from the step thus taken. The Boys' Club seems to be well established now. It has been holding its weekly meetings since last October with almost full average attendance. On Friday, 15th March, it welcomed the visit of Mr. Hamilton, of this town, who gave a most interesting and fascinating talk on Spiders.

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Clough.—Presntation to the Rev. J. D.l and Mrs. Davies. The Annual Congregationa Social took place on Friday evening, March 16th. In spite of inclement weather, there were many present. The proceedings commenced at 7 o'clock with an excellent tea provided by the ladies. When tea was over the minister having been elected chairman, referred to the work of the Sunday School during the past year, and the need of greater support, emphasising the duty of the congregation in regard to it at all times. Valuable book prizes were given to the members of the Sunday School, the distribution was made by Miss M. Donnan and Mrs. Haslett. After which, Mr. Hugh Donnan, Elder, supported by Mr. Samuel Robinson, Elder, and Mr. Hugh Shaw, Secretary, rose to present Rev. J. D. Davies, with a wallet containing Treasury Notes, and Mrs. Davies with a handsome travelling rug. On making the presentation, Mr. Donnan said, " I have been asked by the Committee to perform a very pleasant duty to-night, to present to our worthy minister and his wife, a small token of the esteem of the Congregation. For the past 15 years Mr. Davies has worked wholeheartedly amongst us, ever ready to share our joys and to sympathise and help us in sorrow or trouble and our gift to him to-night is just in a measure to show him how very much we appreciate his work, and how glad we are that he has recovered from his illness. We are not forgetting Mrs. Davies, who has helped him so cheerfully to carry on the good work here. She is a member of a family long associated with this Church, and

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her many services to it require no enumeration from me. We ask her to accept from us a small token of our esteem. With very great pleasure I hand Mr. and Mrs. Davies our gifts." Rev. J. D. Davies, replied, "I thank you, Mr. Donnan, Elders and Members of the Congregation, very much for your valuable gifts to my wife and myself, indeed I thank you for the sympathy and goodwill you have always shown me during my ministry, which has been a very happy one. I have been with you 15 years during which we lived and laboured together in storm and shine, on the best terms, we accomplished a few things for the good of our Church, in connection with which your zeal and generosity accounted for the success of our efforts. I am sorry our venerable friend, Mr. Allen is unable to be present with us to-night owing to indisposition, he would have liked to be here, for he has been an unfailing supporter of the congregation amd minister and deeply interested in all matters concerning our church. Many of the older generation have passed away, and I am glad to see the young people ready to fill the gaps left in our ranks and willing to serve and do their share. I am sure they will support our cause as loyally and generously as did their fathers." A first class programme was arranged by the organist Miss I. Donnan. Miss Vera Nelson rendered very effectively two songs "The Sundial in my Garden," and "I found a paradise" Miss Esther Moffett sang "Cherry-ripe," very sweetly. Master D. W. Moffett, recited "I know a little girl," in a manly way. Miss A. Russell brought down the house with her recitations "The Inventor's Wife," and "The Grumbling Husband," and she had to respond to encores. Mr. Frank Wilson gave a most amusing recitation entitled "William the Corn-curer," and he did it well. Rev. J. D. Davies, sang two songs, "She is far from the land," and "I hear you calling me." The social was an unqualified success and closed with the Benediction. The Secretary has informed the Committee of the Church that a bequest of £50 has been received from the executors of the will of the late Mr. James Shaw, of Knocksticken. The Local Branch of the Women's League, has been very active during the winter months. The members prepared a list of social functions for the purpose of stimulating social life in our midst and at the same time, raise some funds to renovate the Meeting House. The first social took place in Annadorn School, on October 14th, the arrangements were in the hands of Mrs. Hay, Lodge Hill, and Mrs. H. Moffett, Greenwood. The second was held in Clough School, on February 10th, for which Miss A. Russell, Ballylough, and Mrs. D. Moffet, Clara, were responsible. The third, which was on a more ambitious scale was held in the Assembly Hall, Downpatrick, under the management of Mrs. S. Robinson, Summerhill, and Mrs. Haslett, Annadorn. These functions were very popular, well attended and supported. Great credit is due to the ladies and their assistants for their successful work.

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Cairncastle Old Meeting House.—A very very successful Social gathering was held in the Schoolroom, on Tuesday, 21st February. There were nearly eighty persons present, the two sexes being in even proportions. The ages of the company were various, the youngest being a grandson of something more than eight, the eldest, a grandfather of something—more less than eighty. There was an alternation of games and dances, which lasted till midnight, varied by light refreshment and songs and recitations. The aforesaid grandson was the only person who did not seem to pretty thoroughly enjoy himself, he announced that he intended to be present at no more grown-up parties in the future (that is to say, presumably, not till he has grown to them himself). His chance came on March 2nd, when the minister and his wife gave a party to "the children" of the Congregation. It was pleasant to see some of the older young people taking part in the games with the very young ones, some of whom were accompanied by their mothers who disported themselves in a manner which showed that they had sense and grace enough still to be children themselves. More and more of the older "children" arrived as the evening advanced and stayed on till most of the younger ones had departed. On March 6th, a Concert and Variety Entertainment was given in the Cairncastle Lecture Hall, kindly lent by the Minister and Committee of the other Presbyterian Congregation. It was greatly appreciated by a crowded audience. The bulk of the programme was provided by talented people gathered together by Miss Martha Huxley, a member of our Larne Congregation. There were altogether forty-one contributors to the entertainment, all of whom, for the excellence of their performances, deserve individual notice. Although that would be inconvenient in a

report like this, no one could deny the right to mention a few in particular ; for example, the fine singers, the two Misses (Pearl and Josephine) M'Geagh ; the extraordinarily gifted Mimic, Mr. Bob Bell ! the clever little dancer, Miss Ethel Down ; the boy Comedians, Jim M'Cormick and Box Maxwell, who were good at grimaces (and grimy faces) and took care to get a full hearing for everything they said or sang. The names of the " Colleens ' who danced a Four-hand Reel deserve mention, if only as names, though they deserved it for their performance as well, the Misses Dooris, Heggarty, Duddy and Ogilby. Other notable groups were Mr. Hay's Orchestra who produced delightful selections ; and the Johnston Star Male Quartet who were said to have " surpassed themselves " (though indeed " themselves " would have been hard to beat). The only local contributors were ten little " Ballygally Bluebells " who figured in a dance known as " The Donegall Wedding," and, four of them, in a four-hand reel. The quality of the programme may be judged by the fact that the encores prolonged it until nearly eleven o'clock. At the conclusion, tea for the entertainers was served in the schoolroom, and was partaken of by a good many others besides.

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Killinchy.—The Annual Meeting and Congregational Social was held on Thursday, March 8th. Tea was provided at 7 o'clock, when a numerous company of members and Sunday School Scholars were present to enjoy the good things which the ladies had provided. It being the occasion of the Annual Meeting, the Minister presided. In his opening speech he reviewed some of the chief events of the past year, recalling losses by death sustained and some of the chief events which called for particular mention. Among other things worthy of mention he intimated that considerable expenditure had taken place in connection with the Church roof, the couplings holding up the roof having decayed at the wall-plate, it was absolutely necessary to make good this kind of weakness. He was pleased to report that this work had been done in a satisfactory manner. There had also been other outlays which made the accounts for the year heavier than usual, but it was right to note that most of the cost had been met. The Secretary read the minutes of last Annual Meeting which were unanimously adopted. The financial statements comprising the Treasurer's Statement in account with the Congregation, the Sunday School account and the Renovation Account were submitted to the members and on the motion of Mr. Thomas Finlay, seconded by Mr. James Watson, were passed unanimously. The election of officers was then proceeded with, Mr. J. H. Fitchie, Secretary, and Mr. Thomas Lindsay, Treasurer, having filled their office for many years were unanimously elected for the ensuing year. At the close of the business meeting prizes were distributed to the Sunday School Scholars for regular attendance during last year. A happy meeting was brought to a close by singing the doxology and the pronouncing of the benediction. On Friday and Saturday, March 16th and 17th, the Dramatic Society gave a representation of the Comedy entitled " Paul Twyning " by George Shields, in three acts. This popular play well-known in the North of Ireland drew a full house on Friday at 8 p.m., and an intensely crowded audience at the same hour on Saturday. Seeing that the acting was exceptionally good it goes without saying that it was well received, and well it might be for the players were fully imbued with the spirit of the Comedy. They rendered the piece with a verve which inspired the audience with concentrated attention. It would be invidious to single out individual players, but the leading players sustained their parts with a wholehearted devotion for over two hours in a manner which deserved great praise. The part of Paul Twyning was taken by Mr. James Osborne, that of Dan Deegan by Mr. Wm. Banks, James Deegan, by Mr. Frank Osborne, Dennis M'Gothigan, by Mr. Wm. Stewart, Mr. O'Hagan, by Mr. J. H. Fitchie, Rose M'Gothigan by Miss Osborne, Patrick Deegan by Mr. H. Kelly. Daisy Mullan by Miss Orr (who imitated the American accent as though to the manner born), Jim Deegan by Master Sammy Fitchie, and Mrs. Deegan by Miss S. M. Hay. During the intervals music was provided by Messrs. Boston and Ross, on Friday night, and by Mrs. and Miss Ellison on Saturday night. Their services were greatly appreciated.

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Mountpottinger.—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held on Wednesday, March 7th, when a very satisfactory attendance was recorded. Mr. James Orr occupied the Chair, and congratulated the members in the manner in which they had held together without a resident minister at the head of affairs. The Financial Statement showed an adverse balance on the year's

working but under all circumstances was deemed satisfactory. The Committee's Report showed that the various activities had been well maintained. The retiring Officers and Committee were unanimously re-elected for another year. We regret to report the death of Mrs. J. M'Dowell (neè Catherine Mitchell), which took place on March 9th, after an illness lasting three months or more. Connected as she was from early years with the Sunday School and Choir, we shall miss her very much. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her relatives. The interment took place on March 12th, at Dundonald Cemetery and was conducted by Rev. A. Whitford. Our hearty congratulations are extended to Miss Adelaide Beattie, on her successes at the recent Belfast Musical Competitions when she won a gold medal for Mezzo-Sopranos and also the Rose Bowl. Miss Beattie is a most faithful member of our Church Choir and a Teacher in the Sunday School.

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York Street.—During the illness of the Minister, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., the services have been well maintained. At the Annual Meeting of the congregation it was reported that the membership was the largest in the history of the church, and was steadily increasing. On Saturday, 25th February, Dr. Hunter, F.Z.S., gave a lecture to the Guild on "Darwin." The hall was crowded out. Mr. C. J. M'Kisack took the chair, and spoke of the good work the church was doing by bringing such lectures within reach of the people and providing a platform within the church where a scientist could give his views without fear or apology. The nature of the audience was itself a tribute to Mr. Agnew's value. Amongst those who spoke were a Senator, a Councillor, a lawyer, a doctor, and a poet, and to yet there were others who could read and write only with difficulty. Such is the fellowship which has gathered to York Street during the past few years. On Sunday, 26th, Mr. Agnew was able to say a few words of farewell to the congregation. The church was crowded out. He departed on Monday night to Switzerland and the majority of the congregation gathered to see him depart and wish him "bon voyage." It was not without satisfaction for it was obvious that while in Belfast he could never obtain that rest which his serious illness demands. Though officially off duty he has still attended to every detail of congregational work. The sudden death of his friend and one of our most esteemed members, Mr. James Shaw, on the morning of his departure, was a sad blow to all, and only the absolute order of Sir Thomas Houston induced Mr. Agnew not to postpone his leaving. The different Presbyteries have undertaken to supply the puplit indefinitely and there seems no doubt that the congregation will hold together.

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The Women's League, First House Branch. In addition to the usual fortnightly meetings of the League, the Work Section under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Hill, now meets once a month when materials are provided and cut-out for all members willing to help with this charitable side of the League's Work. On Wednesday afternoon, 8th February, Miss Hutton gave a most interesting "Travel Talk," dealing principally with the Island of Ischia, its geography, history, products, scenery, and connection with 3 famous women. A vote of thanks proposed by Mrs. Hume, O.B.E., to Miss Hutton for her very enjoyable and instructive "talk" was enthusiastically passed. On Wednesday evening, 22nd February, the principal item on the programme was an exhibition of Post Cards thrown on a screen with the aid of a radio' optician. The Postcards brought and described by several members, were very varied. Holiday resorts, Pittochrie, Bournemouth, Blackpool, etc., were shown by Miss E. L. Ritchie and Mrs. M'Fadden. Harvesting in Western Canada was illustrated by photographs (lent by Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Central Hall), and views were also shown displaying wonderful winter effects at Niagara, how salt is obtained by evaporation, in France, etc. This evening was so much enjoyed that it was decided to have another "Post Card Night," on 21st March. On Wednesday afternoon, 7th March, a most intersting talk on "The Ideal Woman" was given by Mrs. Eustace Thompson, who took as her text, Solomon's definition of a virtuous woman, and made the statement that every woman has three things to look after, mind, body and soul, illustrating her views by diagrams and quotations from prose and verse. An interesting general discussion took place winding up with a hearty vote of thanks proposed by Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Jackson (Mountpottinger) has consented to give a talk on "Publications" at the afternoon meeting on 4th April, and at the evening meeting on 18th April, there will be a "Cookery Talk" by Miss Florence Irwin.

Obituary.

Mr. James Shaw.

York Street Congregation has suffered a great loss in the death of Mr. James Shaw, at his residence, 61 University Street, Belfast, on February 26th. He was a valued official of the Belfast Harbour Board, and was well-known in the City as also in Holywood and Whitehead. Mr. Shaw was amongst the many who have joined York Street in the past few years from other denominations. He immediately began to take an active share in the work of the congregation as did his wife, and daughter, Dr. Maitland, indeed it is said that their seat was never empty and at the Guild he was often the life and spirit of the proceedings. Until Christmas he had never known a days' illness and only two weeks before his death he had been appointed Stipend Collector of the Church, and had spoken at the Annual Meeting. Our sympathies go to Mrs. Shaw and Dr. Maitland.

Mr. Agnew, his minister and friend, was unfortunately unable to postpone his departure to Switzerland, and the funeral service was conducted by Rev. S. P. Whitehouse.

MR. JAMES McERVEL.

The First Presbyterian (Non Subscribing) Congregation, Holywood, has lost by death another of its old and respected members. Mr. James M'Ervel, of Temora, Cultra, passed away early on Tuesday morning, March 27th, aged 84, after a brief illness. With his brother, the late Mr. Thomas M'Ervel, he founded the well-known business of Messrs. T. &. J. M'Ervel, Implement and Seed Merchants, Victoria Square, Belfast. Mr. M'Ervel was a man of sterling character who won the respect and even affection of all who knew him. The funeral took place on Wednesday, March 28th, to Gartru, Crumlin. The service at the home was conducted by Rev. Edgar Lockett, First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Holywood, and at the graveside the officiating minister was Rev. S. E. Bowen, of Crumlin.

The chief mourners were Messrs. Duncan and James E. M'Ervel (sons), Messrs. Thomas and John H. E'Ervel and Mr. Archibald M. Lorimer (nephews); also Mr. Sinclair Fitzgerald, Master Thomas Fitzgerald, and Mr. Stephen Orr (relatives). The firm, of which the late Mr. James M'Ervel had been so long the head, was represented by Mr. James Stuart. Mr. M'Ervel, whose wife pre-deceased him a number of years ago, is survived by his two sons and two daughters, to whom we offer our sincere sympathy.

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